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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2011 to March 2012

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 66/90, provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2011 to March 2012.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 66/90 of 9 December 2011, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and, to that end, requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all the media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2011 to March 2012.

II. 2011 Caribbean regional seminar on decolonization, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 31 May to 2 June 2011

3. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples held its 2011 annual regional seminar in Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 31 May to 2 June 2011. The seminar, hosted by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was conducted within the framework of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020).

4. The Department arranged for the deployment of a press officer from Headquarters to cover the seminar and issued a press kit that was made available ahead of the event. It issued four press releases, which were carried by the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department and shared with the network of United Nations information centres for local dissemination. A message issued by the Secretary-General on the occasion was also widely disseminated.

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

Services to the media

5. During the reporting period, the Department press service issued a total of 38 press releases on decolonization in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings by various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly (Special Political and Decolonization Committee) and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

6. The United Nations News Centre continued to provide regular coverage of United Nations work on decolonization in the six official languages. With over 1 million page views per month on average, the Internet-based news portal further distributed its stories through RSS feeds, e-mail to some 50,000 subscribers and through Facebook and Twitter accounts in English and French.

United Nations website

7. In July 2011, the Web Services Section of the Department launched a completely redesigned and updated site on the United Nations and decolonization in the six official languages. Since its launch, the website in all languages has had over 21,000 page views. The Department continues to maintain and update the website. In May 2011, the Web Services Section created and launched a website dedicated to the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (May 25-31) in the six official languages. The section also continues to maintain a decolonization portal page as part of the Global Issues site (http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/decolonization/).

United Nations Television

8. United Nations Television provided extensive coverage of issues related to decolonization during the reporting period, including the report of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, which was broadcast live and as a highlights package to television clients and was webcast on the United Nations multimedia website. The deliberations on the consensus text on Puerto Rico of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was also webcast live and on demand, as were other meetings including the 81st plenary meeting of the General Assembly on Non-Self-Governing Territories and other issues.

9. The press conference of the Secretary-General in New Zealand in September 2011, at which he referred to issues regarding self-determination, provided material for a story on UNifeed, the television features stream for broadcasters. The press conferences by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina and by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations on the situation of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) were broadcast

live, webcast and covered as a highlights package. United Nations Webcast, as already indicated, covered a total of five events relating to decolonization during the reporting period, representing seven hours of live and archived video.

United Nations Radio

10. United Nations Radio, broadcasting in the six official languages plus Portuguese and Kiswahili, covered the annual regional seminar of the Special Committee that was held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 31 May to 2 June 2011. A senior radio producer was sent to Kingstown to report on the seminar. Its conclusions and recommendations were considered by the Special Committee at its substantive session in June and subsequently transmitted to the General Assembly.

11. United Nations Radio also provided coverage of the Committee sessions on American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands, Western Sahara, Puerto Rico and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and of press conferences by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina and the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations.

United Nations Photo Unit

12. The United Nations Photo Unit also provided coverage of the work of the Special Committee; these photos were disseminated through the Unit website. Many historic photos related to decolonization were also added to the website during this period.

IV. Visitors services

13. The topic of decolonization, including the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee, was regularly included in the narrative of the guided and audio tours of United Nations Headquarters provided by the Department. Two sets of maps on decolonization, which include facts and figures, assisted the guides in explaining to the visitors the historical process of decolonization, as well as the locations of the current Non-Self-Governing Territories. Both the adult and children's versions of the audio tour included information on the topic.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

14. Dag Hammarskjöld Library provides research and information services on decolonization and related issues on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the Library handled an increased demand for research and information services on this topic because a high number of countries, especially in Africa, were celebrating and commemorating their fiftieth or sixtieth independence anniversaries. Requests came mainly from delegates, staff and scholars, who wished to make effective use

of the rich documentary archives of the Organization, including landmark speeches, treaties, maps, Trusteeship Council reports and other relevant information sources.

15. Through its ongoing digitization programme, the Library continued to digitize and post important older documents to the Official Document System to ensure that an increasing number of these important records on decolonization were accessible through the Internet, while also ensuring the preservation of the original copies. During the period under review, the greater portion of landmark documentation on decolonization issued for the fifth through thirty-second sessions of the General Assembly were digitized, thus enabling vastly increased access to this resource. This included English, French and Spanish versions of reports of the Trusteeship Council from 1949 to 1974, and the four-volume report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to the Colonial Countries and Peoples.

VI. United Nations publications

16. During the reporting period, the Department continued work on volume 62 (2008) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, which provides comprehensive coverage of the concerns and activities of the United Nations, including decolonization, during 2008. The volume, scheduled for publication in the second quarter of 2012, covers the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

17. In May 2011, the Department published a revised edition of the United Nations primer *Basic Facts about the United Nations*. It features an entire chapter, with accompanying appendices, documenting the history of the contributions of the United Nations to decolonization up to the present day. The book appeared in French in February 2012, and is scheduled to come out in Spanish in April 2012, in addition to being published in several local languages.

VII. Graphic Design Unit

18. The Graphic Design Unit of the Department worked with the Department of Political Affairs to produce a visual identity for a poster, postcard and online products to mark the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 2011-2020. The visual identity will also be used in materials to promote the annual regional seminar.

VIII. United Nations information centres and services

19. The network of United Nations information centres continued to disseminate information about decolonization and promote the work of the Fourth Committee, often in local languages, among students, civil society and the media.

20. The United Nations Information Service at Geneva issued press releases on the work of the Human Rights Council and other human rights treaty bodies and experts that touched on the effects of colonization and decolonization in the context of country reviews. Themes related to decolonization were also occasionally addressed

during the Service news briefings held twice a week. Information on decolonization and the role of the Trusteeship Council in the decolonization process was included in the Service's guided tours of the Palais des Nations, as well as in the information programmes organized for visiting groups. Approximately 95,000 visitors took the guided tour in 2011.

21. The United Nations work in the area of decolonization was a regular feature in the briefing and guided tour programmes of the United Nations Information Service at Vienna, primarily in the context of an overview of the main activities and achievements of the Organization. In 2011, more than 50,000 people took guided tours in Vienna and approximately 7,000 people participated in the briefing and lecture programmes. In addition, information on decolonization-related issues was shared with members of the civil society and non-governmental organizations community in Vienna.

IX. Conclusions

22. **The Department of Public Information, as the public voice of the Organization, continues to disseminate information about decolonization. Using both traditional and new information and communications technologies, it continues to stress the need for immediate and full implementation of the 1960 United Nations Declaration on Decolonization. The work of the Special Committee, which is the intergovernmental body exclusively devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda, remains at the centre of the Department's outreach activities with media, civil society and educational institutions.**